

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: MOPS VS

SUBJECT: ARVN DIFFICULTIES ON THE MEKONG

FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL CAN THO BEING REPEATED

QUOTE

CAN THO 0223

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, VS

SUBJECT: ARVN DIFFICULTIES ON THE MEKONG

REFERENCE: CAN THO 0221

1. THE BATTLE FOR THE MEKONG RIVER BANK NORTH OF HONG NGU CONTINUES. DESPITE THE 15 TH ARVN REGIMENTAL COMMANDER'S PROMISE OF A VICTORY PARADE AND MGEN NGHI'S APRIL 18 PREDICTION THE CAMPAIGN WOULD BE OVER IN " TWO DAYS", THE 9 TH DIVISION CONTINUES TO BE HEAVILY COMMITTED AND PROGRESS IS SLOW.

2. COMMENTING ON THE HONG NGU BATTLE APRIL 22, ACTING MR IV DEPUTY COMMANDER BGEN NGUYEN THANH HOANG POINTED OUT THE
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9 TH DIVISION FACED IMPORTANT DIFFICULTIES. NVA UNITS ENGAGED IN THE BATTLE ARE STRONG, THE TROOPS FRESH, WELL SUPPLIED AND ARMED. THE NVA HAD EXCELLENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE TERRAIN AND WERE DUG IN GOOD POSITIONS. ARVN TROOPS DEPLOYED IN HONG NGU HAVE NEVER BEEN SUBJECTED TO 122 MM ROCKET FIRE AND ARE STILL INTIMIDATED BY THE NOISE. THE NVA, OPERATING FROM SECURE BASE AREAS BEHIND THE FRONTIER, ARE ABLE TO ROTATE THEIR UNITS REGULARLY. APART FROM THE INITIAL ROTATION OF THE 14 TH AND 15 TH REGIMENTS, ARVN COULD NOT MOVE SO FREELY SINCE ITS LINES OF COMMUNICATIONS ARE LONGER. THE 15 TH REGIMENT'S TROOPS, HOANG REMARKED, ARE SHOWING SIGNS OF STRAIN AND FATIGUE. FURTHERMORE, WITH UNITS SCATTERED ACROSS NORTHERN HONG NGU, THE 9 TH DIVISION'S COMMAND AND CONTROL IS LESS THAN DESIRABLE.

3. ALTHOUGH UNWILLING TO SET A DATE FOR THE BATTLE'S END, HOANG REMAINS CONVINCED THE 9 TH DIVISION WILL SUCCEED. HE ECHOED NGHI'S CONTENTION THAT AS SOON AS THE FIGHTING IS OVER, MR IV WILL CONSTRUCT A STRONG FIRE BASE NEAR THE RIVER'S EDGE TO THWART FURTHER NVA DRIVES INTO THE AREA. IN THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS HEAVY CLOUD COVER HAS SEVERELY LIMITED VTUF SUPPORT.

4. NOTING HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM A PHNOM PENH TRIPARTITE MEETING, HOANG REITERATED THAT RVNAF'S COMMITMENT TO DO ALL NECESSARY TO ASSURE THE FREE PASSAGE OF COMBODIA- BOUND CONVOYS. WHILE THE CONVOYS ARE VITAL TO THE SURVIVAL OF VIET NAM'S KHMER ALLIES, HOANG POINTED OUT RVNAF IS PAYING A HIGH PRICE IN CASUALTIES TO ACCOMPLISH THIS OBJECTIVE. ON APRIL 21 ALONE THE 15 TH REGIMENT SUFFERED 8 KIA, 44 WIA, AND 4 APC'S DESTROYED. BARNES UNQUOTE
BUNKER

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